

Personal Motivations Influencing Green Purchase Intention in Gastronomic Tourism and the Role of Environmental Concern

Brikena Sika

*Ismail Qemali University of Vlora,
Albania
brikena.sika@univlora.edu.al*

Servet Gura

*Beder University, Albania
servetgurra@gmail.com*

Kriselda Sulcaj Gura

*Epoka University, Albania
kriseldasulcaj@gmail.com*

Suman Lodh

*Kingston University London,
United Kingdom
S.Lodh@kingston.ac.uk*

Monomita Nandy

*Brunel University of London,
United Kingdom
monomita.nandy@brunel.ac.uk*

Sustainable tourism aims to ensure long-term development through economic balance, resource conservation and cultural heritage; however, global strategies underestimate psychological, social and cultural aspects, creating gaps between scientific debates and practical applications. Gastronomic tourism is considered an integral part of sustainable tourism development, as it contributes to the differentiation of destinations, the preservation of cultural heritage, the reduction of negative impacts on the environment and growth of the local economy through the involvement of local producers and the promotion of short supply chains, influenced by the motivations that drive tourists' decision-making. Based on such evidences, this study aims to test a conceptual model that integrates personal motivations and environmental concern as predictors of green purchase intention in the Albanian gastronomic tourism sector. The analysis uses the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling method. The main finding is that, in the context of gastronomic tourism, social motivations (SSM) and sensory motivations (SAM) are the main factors that drive green purchasing (GPI), while environmental concern (EC) acts as a mediating mechanism only in the case of social sustainability motivation (SSM). From a theoretical perspective, the study integrates different dimensions of personal motivations within a unified theoretical framework, combining TPB, VBN, NAM and SDT to explain the formation of GPI. It contributes to the literature by positioning SSM and SAM as important elements in gastronomic tourism. Future studies could use longitudinal designs to test changes in GPI and EC over time, and apply experimental methods to assess the impact of specific marketing and communication variables.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, gastronomic tourism, personal motives, environmental concern, green purchase intention



<https://doi.org/10.26493/2335-4194.19.119-139>

Introduction

The Sustainable Tourism Research Problem

Sustainable tourism aims to ensure long-term development through economic balance, resource conservation and cultural heritage (Hall, 2000). The discourse on authenticity and social equity shows the tension between profit and social justice and the interconnection of stakeholders to create and add value in the process (Pahor Žvanut & Vodeb, 2023). To operationalize this concept, the literature has shifted the focus from normative discussions of sustainable tourism to applied analyses (Amoako et al., 2022). However, while global strategies for sustainable tourism address economic and environmental dimensions, they underestimate psychological, social and cultural aspects, creating gaps between discourse and practice (Paniccia & Baiocco, 2020).

Gastronomic tourism is considered an important vector of sustainable tourism development, as it contributes to the differentiation of destinations, the preservation of cultural heritage, the reduction of negative impacts on the environment and the growth of the local economy through the involvement of local producers and the promotion of short supply chains (Chowdhury et al., 2021), which not only offer authentic experiences for tourists, but also help in the development of innovative mechanisms for the growth of the local economy (Chowdhury et al., 2021).

On the other hand, in gastronomic tourism, the motivations that drive tourists' decision-making are interconnected and are replacing the current strategies by prioritizing health, culture, outdoor experiences, nature, and well-being in addition to the physical, economic, social, cultural, prestigious and symbolic needs (Potti et al., 2023). Hu et al. (2010) note that it is shaped by the combination of functional factors (quality, service, environment) and ethics (environmental and social commitment). Also, organic and local foods are associated with different attributes: organic foods with health, safety and reduction of pesticides (Wier & Calverley, 2002) and local foods with freshness, authenticity and community support; each has gained importance in the selection of culinary destination.

Despite the extensive observation and treatment of these motivations, Auger and Devinney (2007) find an 'attitude-behaviour gap', similar to Ajzen's (1991) 'ethical gap' showing that consumers declare pro-environmental preferences, which do not always translate into sustainable behaviour due to economic reasons, lack of information and lack of access to sustainable products. To explain this gap, the literature studies the role of Environmental Concern (EC), a key mechanism that mediates the relationship between personal motivations and sustainable behaviour, directly influencing consumers' sustainable choices (Chen et al. 2022).

Moreover, Green Purchase Intention (GPI), primarily grounded in Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), is a well-established construct used as an indicator of sustainable behaviour. Joshi and Rahman (2015) predict attitudes, norms, trust and environmental concern as determinants of GPI. This framework has been further expanded with environmental knowledge and ecological concern (Irfan, 2019), sustainability awareness (Gulzar et al., 2024), moral intelligence, environmental concern (Akan-dere & Gümrak, 2025), attitudes, and communication (Pinto-Coelho, 2018), which have been identified as determinants and enhancers of GPI. Despite this expansion, the applications of GPI in gastronomic tourism remain limited and there is a need to develop new models that more deeply examine personal motivations, the mediating role of EC, and the interaction with GPI in this sector.

In this context, Albania offers considerable potential for the development of sustainable tourism. In recent years, gastronomic tourism has grown significantly, supported by the country's rich biodiversity and traditional cuisine. The Albanian Agribusiness Support Facility (2019) report assesses that rural gastronomy has potential, but faces challenges in knowledge, awareness, infrastructure, institutional coordination and managerial capacities, suggesting the need for a national strategy. These findings are also related to the earlier observations of Hall (2000), who noted that, despite the potential, the development of tourism in Albania remains limited by structural and institutional problems.

Research Gap

First, studies on gastronomic tourism have mainly focused on hedonic, cultural and economic motivations, while personal dimensions have been underestimated, limiting the full understanding of the types of motivations (Galati et al., 2023). Second, the literature confirms EC as a strong predictor of GPI (Gulzar et al., 2024; Akandere & Gümrah, 2025) but this remains contradictory as an ‘attitude-behaviour gap’ is still present and much discussed in the literature (Feldmann & Hamm, 2015) and suggests further study on tourism product development and consumer behaviour (Çivire et al., 2024). Third, there is still uncertainty about the mediating role of EC. So far, it is noted that its impact is weak and replaceable by social and moral factors, while Chen et al. (2022) support the mediating role of EC. In this context, Irfan (2019) proposes an integrated model where EC acts as a mediator. Fourth, cultural and geographical limitations: most research on EC and GPI has been conducted in developed European or Asian countries with different cultures, while emerging markets such as Albania, despite their potential, remain unexplored. Fifth, although PLS-SEM is widely used as a predictive method in marketing and management (Cheah et al., 2023), it has not been applied to test the integration of personal motivations, EC, and GPI into a single model in gastronomic tourism.

Research Questions and Study objectives

Based on the problem posed, the study is guided by two main questions: (1) *What are the personal motivations that most strongly influence EC and GPI?*, and (2) *What is the mediating role of EC in the relationship between personal motivations and GPI within gastronomic tourism in Albania?*

The study aims to test a conceptual model that integrates personal motivations and EC as predictors of GPI in the Albanian gastronomic tourism sector. The specific objectives are: (1) to analyse the impact of six personal motivations: HM, CM, PM, EM, SAM and SSM on EC and GPI; (2) to assess the mediating role of EC; (3) to provide empirical evidence from a developing economy and sector like Albania, addressing cultural and geographical gaps in the literature; and (4) to de-

rive the results from the model combination of factorial analysis and regression function such as through a PLS-SEM approach.

The introductory section is followed by a review of the literature on motivations, EC, and GPI; the methodology and measurement instruments with PLS-SEM; the empirical analysis of the results; a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature; and conclusions, limitations and suggestions for future research.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual model of the study is based on four widely used theories to explain pro-environmental behaviours and provides the basis for integrating personal motivations, EC, and GPI. First, Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) explains intentions and behaviours through attitudes, subjective norms and perception of control and is widely used in studies on sustainable consumption. Researchers such as Kwon and Boger (2021), Iqbal et al. (2023), Gulzar et al. (2024) and DiPietro and Levitt (2019) have expanded it to include moral norms and environmental awareness, thus increasing its validity through the conduct of international evidence.

Second, Stern et al.'s (1999) Value-Belief-Norm Theory (VBN) argues that pro-environmental behaviours stem from values, ecological beliefs, and moral norms. Personal values and health beliefs influence organic purchases (Finch, 2006), while Islamic values and moral intelligence (Hasnah Hassan, 2014) influence sustainable purchases. Likewise, self-efficacy and the belief that green purchases improve the environment and that EC influences sustainable behaviour have a stronger effect on individuals with high prosociality (Chen et al., 2022).

Third, Schwartz's (1977) Norm Activation Model (NAM) argues that personal norms are activated when individuals feel moral responsibility for the consequences of their actions. In this context, altruism, nature-human balance, environmental protection, cultural and spiritual dimensions, and social sustainability are associated with change and changeable behaviours (Passafaro et al., 2015).

Fourth, Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory (SDT) distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, which influence sustainable goals (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to Caracciolo et al. (2019), intrinsic motivations are related to personal values and the desire to protect the environment, while extrinsic motivations are related to social pressure, status, or economic benefits.

Green Purchase Intention (GPI) in Sustainable Tourism

Green Purchase Intention (GPI) indicates consumers' willingness to purchase green products, becoming one of the most widely used concepts to explain sustainable behaviours. According to the literature, GPI is influenced by a combination of personal, social, and cultural factors: environmental knowledge, environmental concern, subjective norms, attitudes (Jaiswal & Kant, 2018), hedonic and functional values (Mishra, 2023), trust, and communication (Pinto-Coelho, 2018) are all reported as factors with a strong influence on GPI. Akandere and Gümrah (2025) show that environmental knowledge affects GPI both directly and through EC. In addition, the literature also emphasizes the influence of cultural factors that orient consumers towards sustainable behaviours. According to Nguyen and Tran (2025), while minimalism positively influences GPI, collectivist norms reinforce this relationship.

Personal Motivations as Predictors of EC and GPI

Health Motivation (HM)

In gastronomic tourism, sustainability (health, lack of chemicals, locality and contacts with producers) emerges as a separate motivating dimension and defines distinct tourist segments, where a significant part of the market, in addition to hedonism and authenticity, chooses gastronomic destinations for eco-social reasons. This shows that tourists are attracted by offers that promise freshness, traceable origin and health benefits and that bring them closer to sustainable practices (Galati et al., 2023). Thus, naturalness is a key determinant of sustainable purchases (Caracciolo et al., 2019), while environmental knowledge and concern strengthen this relationship by

increasing the sense of responsibility for sustainable behaviour (Akandere & Gümrah, 2025). These findings suggest that HM increases both sensitivity to environmental concern (EC) and predisposition to GPI in the context of gastronomic tourism, as consumers who have strong biospheric values and believe in the organic-health connection are more likely to purchase organic products (Finch, 2006). In this context, the study raises the first hypothesis:

H1A HM positively affects Environmental Concern (EC).

H1B HM positively affects Green Purchase Intention (GPI).

Cultural Motivation (CM)

Cultural motivation (CM) is defined by the literature (Kim & Eves, 2012; Kim et al., 2022) as an essential dimension of sustainable tourism, as traditional food and sustainable practices are closely linked to identity, image, authenticity, experience and cultural heritage. Therefore, gastronomic tourism cannot be limited only to food consumption because it is multidimensional and influences destination selection. At the same time, it includes education, socialization, preservation of traditions, respect for the community, creation of cultural memory and promotion of fair practices where, by placing culture at the centre of the tourist experience, it positively affects EC and GPI (Broccardo et al., 2017; Galati et al., 2023). Thus, food is an irreplaceable element of authenticity and tourist experience, making the destination unique and helping to differentiate it (DiPietro & Levitt, 2019) and serving as a tool for preserving traditions, involving communities and sustainable development of rural areas (Ciolac et al., 2020). In this context, the second hypothesis of the study is raised:

H2A CM positively affects EC.

H2B CM positively affects GPI.

Environmental Motivation (EM)

Environmental motivation (EM) is one of the main drivers of sustainable behaviour in tourism, as it is related to consumers' awareness of environmental impacts and responsibilities. Abdul-Muhmin (2007)

notes that environmentally conscious tourists are more likely to choose sustainable practices. In the gastronomic tourism sector, choosing local and sustainably produced food serves as a direct indicator of this motivation, positively influencing the perception of green consumption (Kim & Eves, 2012). Furthermore, Akandere and Gümrah (2025) highlight that environmental motivation is closely related to environmental education and knowledge, which shape sustainable consumption behaviour and increase the predisposition to translate attitudes into concrete actions. Also, its impact is supported by moral and social mechanisms, where consumers with strong ecological values exhibit higher sustainable purchase intentions (Galati et al., 2023). In this context, the third hypothesis of the study is raised:

H3A EM positively affects EC.

H3B EM positively affects GPI.

Prestige Motivation (PM)

Prestige motivation (PM) is related to the desire for social differentiation, the expression of image and status through consumption. In gastronomic tourism, PM serves as a signal of symbolism that increases social capital and creates differentiation through experience (Galati et al., 2023). At the destination level, image frames and green branding increase the symbolic value of pro-environmental choices, making sustainable consumption a socially acceptable act (Chan & Marafa, 2014). Likewise, Kim et al. (2022) confirm that, for certain groups of tourists, prestige remains a determinant of the choice of destinations where authenticity and differentiation play an essential role. On the other hand, the willingness to be environmentally friendly is influenced by social norms and self-perception, suggesting that prestige operates as a driver for the adoption of green practices (Kim & Eves, 2012). In this context, PM is expected to increase both EC, through the need to maintain an ethical image, and GPI, through status signalling by means of sustainable choices (Galati et al., 2023). In this context, the study raises the fourth hypothesis:

H4A PM positively affects EC.

H4B PM positively affects GPI.

Sensory Appeal Motivation (SAM)

According to Kim and Eves (2012) and Kim et al. (2022), in gastronomic tourism, sensory appeal motivation (SAM) is related to the search for multisensory experiences such as taste, aroma, appearance and presentation, which form memories and destination differentiation. Sensory experience has been proven to be a determinant of satisfaction and loyalty towards green products and destinations (Haase et al., 2018). In gastronomic tourism, these experiences are often associated with the authenticity of local food and increase the emotional capital of the consumer (Galati et al., 2023). At the same time, Magnier and Crié (2015) note that visual and aesthetic elements, such as ecological packaging or eco-labels used in the communication of the marketing message, strengthen the connection between sensory experience and EC. Therefore, it can be said that SAM is not limited to personal satisfaction, but contributes to the increase of EC and GPI through aesthetic symbolism and emotional connection. In this context, the study raises the fifth hypothesis:

H5A SAM positively affects EC.

H5B SAM positively affects GPI.

Social Sustainability Motivation (SSM)

Social sustainability motivation (SSM) is related to sensitivity to social justice, equity and the impact of tourism on the community. In gastronomy, this motivation reflects the demand to support local producers, to preserve authenticity and to reinforce short supply chains (Galati et al., 2023; Cembalo et al., 2013). Studies show that consumers who display social values have a greater influence on sustainable consumption (Kim & Eves, 2012; Biswas & Roy, 2015). Sustainable choices influenced by altruism, moral responsibility and a sense of the role of prosociality, shows that social values can strengthen the translation of attitudes into sustainable behaviour (Chen et al., 2022). It is also evidenced that agritourism and rural activities strengthen the link between consumption and the socio-economic development of local areas (Ciolac et al., 2020). In this context, through social sensitivity, SSM contributes to the growth of both EC and GPI,

turning the sustainable choice into an act of solidarity and social justice (Chowdhury & Alamgir, 2021). In this context, the study raises the sixth hypothesis:

H6A SSM positively affects EC.

H6B SSM positively affects GPI.

Environmental Concern (EC)

Environmental Concern (EC) represents individuals' concern about environmental issues and is the main predictor of sustainable behaviours. Studies show that high levels of EC are associated with a stronger predisposition to green choices and directly affect GPI (Mohd Suki & Mohd Suki, 2015; Ali and Ahmad, 2016; Gulzar et al., 2024). In gastronomic tourism, EC is manifested through a preference for organic, local food and certified 'green' services, orienting consumers towards responsible practices (Galati et al., 2023). At a theoretical level, the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) and the Norm Activation Model (NAM) conceptualize EC as a mechanism that translates personal values and motivations into sustainable behaviour (Stern et al., 1999; Schwartz, 1977). This positions EC not only as a direct determinant of GPI, but also as a mediating variable, through which different personal motivations influence consumers' orientation towards sustainable choices (Galati et al., 2023). In this context, the study raises the seventh and eighth hypotheses:

H7 EC positively affects Green Purchase Intention (GPI).

H8 EC mediates the relationships between HM, CM, EM, PM, SAM, SSM and GPI.

Study Methodology

Research Approach

The study follows a quantitative, deductive and explanatory approach, focused on empirical testing of the conceptual model with latent and reflective constructs. For the analysis of the relationships between latent constructs and for the assessment of direct and indirect effects, the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) method is applied. This approach is selected according to the suggestions of Hair et al. (2022) as it is suitable for exploratory analyses with data that do not follow a normal distribution.

Henseler et al. (2017) note that SEM is a tool for testing theory and, if a variable is not part of the theoretical nomological network being examined, its inclusion in the model is methodologically questionable as it risks shifting the focus from 'exploration/confirmation' to 'data mining'; as such, there are no control variables included in the conceptual model. According to the suggestions of Hair et al. (2021), adding control variables increases the complexity of the structural model as it increases the number of links (paths), and if this happens, a much larger study sample is required to maintain statistical power, which may further cause problems in maintaining statistical power and parsimony. According to Shmueli et al. (2019), models that are overloaded with variables not predicted by the theory may exhibit an artificially high explanatory power, but their predictive validity (Q^2) has poor validity in reality and the inclusion of demographic variables would increase the R^2 of the GPI, and as a result, an 'over-fitting' condition would be created. Moreover, according to the suggestions of Hulland et al. (2018), in market research, demographic variables often exhibit low variances and for these reasons fail to produce statistically significant adjustments.

Conceptual Model and Measurement of Study Construct

The conceptual model of the study consists of seven latent constructs and 37 reflective indicators. The measurements of the model constructs were carried out with a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). The conceptual model consists of 6 independent variables, which were borrowed from Galati et al. (2021): Health Motivation (HM), Cultural Motivation (CM), Environmental Motivation (EM), Prestige Motivation (PM), Sensory Appeal Motivation (SAM), Social Sustainability Motivation (SSM); a mediating variable: 'Environmental Concern (EC)', adopted from Chen et al. (2022) and based on the 'NEP Scale'; and a dependent variable: 'Green Purchase Intention (GPI)', borrowed from Gulzar et al. (2024) and modified to adapt to the context of Albanian gastronomic tourism. Initially, in this study, we argue that, in gastronomic tourism, the EC construct

functions as a mediating mechanism activated by hedonic motivations and needs as reflected in the theory that in gastronomy, decisions are mostly shaped by hedonic concerns. Additionally, tourists' search for naturalness increases their sensitivity to environmental concerns (Akandere & Gumrah, 2025), turning EC into a mediator that transforms personal motivations into GPI. At a theoretical level, the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) and Norm Activation Model (NAM) conceptualize EC as a mechanism that translates personal values and motivations into sustainable behaviour (Stern et al., 1999; Schwartz, 1977; Dunlap et al., 2000). This positions EC not only as a direct determinant of GPI, but also as a mediating variable, through which different personal motivations influence consumers' orientation towards sustainable choices (Irfan, 2019; Al-Adamat et al., 2020; Gaspar et al., 2022; Galati et al., 2023).

Unlike Galati et al. (2021), who used Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to classify constructs and reduce variables to a smaller number of constructs, in our study, we use the PLS-SEM approach, which is a powerful method and, in recent years, widely used for studies in the field of social sciences to evaluate complex causal models that aim to predict dependent variables (in our case GPI) (Ringle et al., 2020). So, as we described above, the difference is fundamental: Galati et al. (2021) conducted a classification study in an attempt to learn 'who are the groups of tourists and what motivates them'; the study adds value on how one variable influences another in a hierarchical manner.

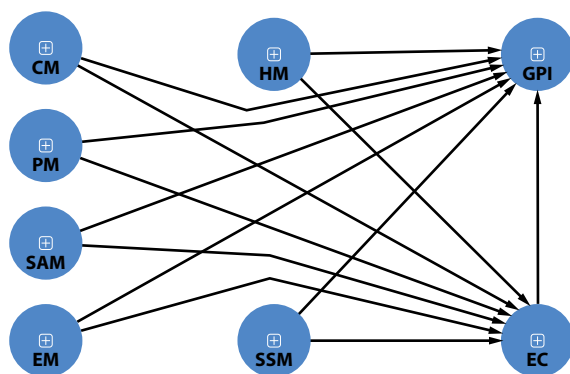


Figure 1 Study Conceptual Model

Additionally, it did not segment the study sample, but rather attempted to investigate a psychological mechanism. Referring to Shumeli et al. (2019), the methodological novelty consists in testing a new mediation mechanism. The introduction of EC as a mediator in the model completely changes the logical flow of our model and offers a completely new flow, not previously tested. Referring to the suggestions of Sarstedt et al. (2017), the use of known constructs in a new structural configuration (path configuration) constitutes an original and coherent contribution and legitimizes the use of the PLS-SEM approach. Although the study adapts the scales of Gallati et al. (2021) and integrated them into the extended structural model, their study aims at market segmentation, which makes demography essential and very meaningful, whereas our study is based on the psychological, mediated process; demographic factors remain 'distal' and do not change the structure of the tested mechanism.

Targeted Population, Sample and Sampling Method

The target population of this study is domestic tourists who frequent tourist destinations that offer sustainable and environmentally friendly products/services and operate in different typologies such as guest-houses, rural/mountain tourism resorts, agritourism farms, bio farms, ecotourism, etc. The questionnaire was distributed online through Google Forms during the period May–June 2025. For sampling, the study used the non-probabilistic convenience sampling approach, as it is considered acceptable in PLS-SEM research aimed at prediction (Hair et al., 2022) and does not rely on distributive assumptions. Although the sample does not meet the classic '10-times rule' ($37 \times 10 = 370$ participants), according to the suggestions of Kline (2017) and Hair et al. (2019), the sample exceeds the minimum threshold of 200 participants, considered sufficient for models of medium complexity, as it allows for stable estimates of the coefficients.

Study Instrumental Tools

The study followed the recommendations of Field (2024) for descriptive and frequency analyses and used the SPSS program, v.24, while, for the analysis

of the measurement model and structural model, it followed the recommendations of Ringle and Sarstedt (2015) and used SmartPLS, v. 4.1.1.4.

Study Procedures and Statistical Analysis

Since all the constructs of the study are reflective, the Consistent PLS (PLSC) algorithm is used to evaluate the measurement model and the structural model. For the respective evaluations of the measurement model, the suggestions of Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Hair et al. (2019) are followed, where, specifically, for construct reliability and validity, Outer Loadings (β), Significance (p value), Cronbach's Alpha (α), Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are analysed. For discriminant validity, the suggestions of Henseler et al. (2015) are followed, and the following measures are analysed: Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT), Fornell-Larcker Criterion, and Cross-Loadings. For model fit evaluation, the measures suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999) and Henseler et al. (2014) are used: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Squared Euclidean Distance (d_{ULS}), Geodesic Distance (d_G) and Normed Fit Index (NFI).

Regarding the structural model evaluation, the recommendations of Hair et al. (2022) are followed, in the following order: Path Coefficients (β), is utilized to analyse the direction and magnitude of direct and indirect effects between latent constructs, and statistical significance assessed through p value. To control inter-structural multicollinearity, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) measure (Hair et al., 2019) is applied. The Coefficient of Determination (R^2) is used to estimate the percentage of explained variance (Hair et al., 2022). The assessment of Predictive Relevance (Q^2) is carried out through the blindfolding procedure (Geisser, 1974), which gives importance to 'cross-validation' for predicting models. Also, for the 'statistical significance of the coefficients' and 'confidence intervals', 'Bootstrapping' with 5,000 subsamples is applied, while due to the non-normal distribution of the data, the 'Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa)' method is used (Streukens & Leroi-Werelds, 2016). This approach is in line with the recommendations of Henseler et al. (2009).

Study Results

Frequency Analysis

Table 1 presents the demographic data of the 312 participants in the study. The gender distribution of the participants is 55.8% female and 44.2% male. The results show gender balance, which is important for the empirical analysis as it avoids the dominance of a specific group and ensures the necessary heterogeneity to ensure impartiality in the analysis.

Regarding the age of the participants, we note a concentration in the age group 25–34 years with 33.3%, followed by the age group 15–24 years with 27.9% and the age group 35–44 years with 27.6%. The study sample consists of young people; in other words, in an early stage of social life and career. Regarding the level of education, 55.8% of the participants have completed their studies at the master's level, 24% at the bachelor's level, 10.3% at the secondary level, 9% at the PhD level, and 0.9% at other levels.

Descriptive Analysis

Table 2 presents descriptive data for the study constructs. The calculated results show averages in the range of 3.67 for EC and 3.81 for HM, which indicate a moderately high trend. Similarly, the standard deviation results in the range of 0.76 for CM to 0.93 for SSM. The results provide a moderate variation within the construct, suggesting stability of perceptions among participants, and indicate sufficient difference between constructs.

Evaluation of Measurement Model

Construct Reliability and Validity Analysis

The measurement model is assessed using standard procedures suggested by Henseler et al. (2015) and Hair et al. (2022), for PLS-SEM models. To ensure reliability and convergent validity, first, Outer Loadings (β) values are analysed for each indicator, where all results are higher than 0.70, the minimum accepted limit (Hair et al., 2022). Indicator HM6, of the HM construct, results in a β loading lower than 0.60 and is eliminated from the model according to the recommendations of the existing literature. With its elimination, the model performed the highest values of suitability. Secondly, Cronbach's Alpha (α) and

Table 1. Demographic Data

		N	%
Gender	Female	174	55.8
	Male	138	44.2
	Total	312	100.0
Age	15–24	87	27.9
	25–34	104	33.3
	35–44	86	27.6
	45–54	28	9.0
	+55	7	2.2
	Total	312	100.0
Education Level	Secondary school	2	0.6
	High School	32	10.3
	Bachelor	75	24.0
	Master	174	55.8
	PhD	28	9.0
	Other	1	0.3
	Total	312	100.0
Monthly Incomes	To–49,999 ALL	78	25.0
	50,000–69,999 ALL	72	23.1
	70,000–99,999 ALL	61	19.6
	100,000–129,999 ALL	51	16.3
	130,000–159,999 ALL	28	9.0
	More 1600 160.000 ALL	22	7.1
	Total	312	100.0

Composite Reliability (CR-rho_c) values are analysed, where all results are above the suggested threshold (> 0.70) (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015). Thirdly, Average

Variance Extracted (AVE) values are analysed, where for all constructs, the results are above the minimum threshold (> 0.50) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The calculated results show that the criteria for ensuring convergent validity are met by meeting the methodological standards suggested for PLS-SEM models. The results provide the necessary basis for continuing further evaluation of the measurement model through discriminant validity analysis.

Discriminant Validity Analysis

Discriminant validity is assessed in accordance with the recommendations of Henseler et al. (2015) and Hair et al. (2022), using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion as the main measure and the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and Cross-loadings as additional measures to ensure a more complete and transparent analysis. First, the results of the HTMT values for all reported associations are all below the value 0.85 and are below the suggested threshold as acceptable (Henseler et al., 2015; Ringle et al., 2023), indicating a clear distinction between constructs. Since all values are below the accepted critical threshold, it is concluded that there is no concern for a lack of conceptual distinction between constructs.

As a second measure of discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker Criterion confirms these findings (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In all cases, the square roots of the AVE are larger than the corresponding correlations between the constructs with the exception of the GPI-EC relationship, which results in a square root of 0.824 and signals that the GPI shares more variance

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Study Construct

Construct	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D.
HM	312	1.00	5.00	3.81	0.78
CM	312	1.00	5.00	3.72	0.76
EM	312	1.00	5.00	3.71	0.87
PM	312	1.00	5.00	3.72	0.82
SAM	312	1.00	5.00	3.71	0.83
SSM	312	1.00	5.00	3.74	0.93
EC	312	1.00	5.00	3.67	0.78
GPI	312	1.00	5.00	3.76	0.81

Table 3 Measurement Model (Outer Loadings, S. Deviation, *t* Statistics, *p* value, Cronbach's Alpha, CR, AVE)

Path	β	S.DEV	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	α	CR	AVE
CM1 $\leftarrow$ CM	0.722	0.049	14.626	0.000	0.86	0.86	0.55
CM2 $\leftarrow$ CM	0.719	0.047	15.341	0.000			
CM3 $\leftarrow$ CM	0.717	0.054	13.303	0.000			
CM4 $\leftarrow$ CM	0.831	0.039	21.470	0.000			
CM5 $\leftarrow$ CM	0.718	0.057	12.495	0.000			
EC1 $\leftarrow$ EC	0.786	0.031	25.303	0.000	0.87	0.87	0.63
EC2 $\leftarrow$ EC	0.813	0.032	25.621	0.000			
EC3 $\leftarrow$ EC	0.797	0.031	25.397	0.000			
EC4 $\leftarrow$ EC	0.773	0.030	25.645	0.000			
EM1 $\leftarrow$ EM	0.801	0.072	11.139	0.000	0.91	0.91	0.66
EM2 $\leftarrow$ EM	0.839	0.051	16.564	0.000			
EM3 $\leftarrow$ EM	0.804	0.054	14.899	0.000			
EM4 $\leftarrow$ EM	0.801	0.050	15.930	0.000			
EM5 $\leftarrow$ EM	0.818	0.051	16.035	0.000			
GPI1 $\leftarrow$ GPI	0.832	0.025	33.095	0.000	0.91	0.91	0.68
GPI2 $\leftarrow$ GPI	0.816	0.028	29.348	0.000			
GPI3 $\leftarrow$ GPI	0.856	0.025	34.497	0.000			
GPI4 $\leftarrow$ GPI	0.809	0.028	29.287	0.000			
GPI5 $\leftarrow$ GPI	0.799	0.029	27.199	0.000			
HM1 $\leftarrow$ HM	0.802	0.036	22.158	0.000	0.88	0.88	0.61
HM2 $\leftarrow$ HM	0.802	0.034	23.713	0.000			
HM3 $\leftarrow$ HM	0.748	0.057	13.159	0.000			
HM4 $\leftarrow$ HM	0.737	0.046	15.937	0.000			
HM5 $\leftarrow$ HM	0.799	0.038	20.970	0.000			
PM1 $\leftarrow$ PM	0.780	0.061	12.830	0.000	0.88	0.88	0.65
PM2 $\leftarrow$ PM	0.702	0.060	11.746	0.000			
PM3 $\leftarrow$ PM	0.834	0.044	18.832	0.000			
PM4 $\leftarrow$ PM	0.903	0.032	28.631	0.000			
SAM1 $\leftarrow$ SAM	0.853	0.027	31.195	0.000	0.89	0.89	0.67
SAM2 $\leftarrow$ SAM	0.826	0.031	26.246	0.000			
SAM3 $\leftarrow$ SAM	0.803	0.028	28.768	0.000			
SAM4 $\leftarrow$ SAM	0.781	0.034	23.171	0.000			
SSM1 $\leftarrow$ SSM	0.929	0.062	14.902	0.000	0.92	0.92	0.74
SSM2 $\leftarrow$ SSM	0.840	0.071	11.810	0.000			
SSM3 $\leftarrow$ SSM	0.855	0.068	12.527	0.000			
SSM4 $\leftarrow$ SSM	0.809	0.073	11.123	0.000			

Note (β) = Outer Loading (O), STDEV= Standard Deviation, *T*= *t* Statistics, *P*= level of significance, α =Cronbach's alpha, CR= Composite Reliability (rho_c), AVE= Average Variance Extracted.

with the EC than the EC explains itself. However, this minimal excess of the correlation over the diagonal of the AVE is not considered problematic, because, especially when the construct has confirmed high reliability and convergent validity, these cases are interpreted as narrow conceptual divisions that are not problematic and are acceptable (Hair et al., 2022). In summary, the results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion also meet the conditions for discriminant validity.

Lastly, as suggested by Chin (1998) and Hair et al. (2022), the results of Cross-loadings are analysed, and it turned out that all indicators loaded more on their respective construct than on other constructs. Although this measure is no longer used as a main test, but simply as an auxiliary instrument (Henseler et al., 2015), the results further support the discriminant validity confirmed by the HTMT analysis and the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

To summarize the discriminant analysis, although the HTMT analysis is considered the most reliable

test (Henseler et al., 2015), referring to the suggestions of Hair et al. (2022), the study also uses the additional measures of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and Cross-loadings in a combined manner in order to increase transparency, providing a triple check of the constructs. The results of all three measures show that the model meets the basic criteria of discriminant validity and is fully suitable for continuing with the assessment of the structural model.

Structural Model Assessment

For the evaluation of the structural model, the recommendations and guidelines of Geisser (1974) and Hair et al. (2022) are followed. Specifically, Path Coefficients (β) and statistical significance levels (p value) are analysed for hypothesis testing (Hair et al., 2022). Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is used to assess multicollinearity between constructs and Hair et al.'s (2022) criterion of ($VIF < 5$) was applied. Variance explanation is assessed through the R^2 measure (Hair et

Table 4 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Statistics

	CM	EC	EM	GPI	HM	PM	SAM	SSM
CM								
EC	0.652							
EM	0.544	0.517						
GPI	0.693	0.823	0.548					
HM	0.644	0.740	0.548	0.771				
PM	0.670	0.666	0.442	0.711	0.634			
SAM	0.662	0.734	0.595	0.749	0.680	0.654		
SSM	0.677	0.340	0.708	0.351	0.450	0.473	0.562	

Table 5 Fornell-Larcker Criterion Statistics

	CM	EC	EM	GPI	HM	PM	SAM	SSM
CM	0.742							
EC	0.653	0.792						
EM	0.538	0.518	0.813					
GPI	0.694	0.824	0.548	0.823				
HM	0.641	0.741	0.549	0.771	0.778			
PM	0.665	0.669	0.439	0.714	0.633	0.808		
SAM	0.661	0.735	0.595	0.750	0.681	0.649	0.816	
SSM	0.671	0.340	0.706	0.352	0.450	0.466	0.561	0.859

Table 6 Cross-Loadings Statistics

	CM	EC	EM	GPI	HM	PM	SAM	SSM
CM1	0.722	0.469	0.431	0.502	0.413	0.446	0.491	0.514
CM2	0.719	0.498	0.413	0.472	0.496	0.512	0.517	0.511
CM3	0.717	0.446	0.508	0.517	0.502	0.514	0.509	0.581
CM4	0.831	0.546	0.297	0.573	0.488	0.526	0.510	0.417
CM5	0.718	0.459	0.368	0.506	0.484	0.473	0.427	0.484
EC1	0.515	0.786	0.399	0.637	0.574	0.557	0.579	0.257
EC2	0.514	0.813	0.436	0.672	0.604	0.536	0.602	0.283
EC3	0.538	0.797	0.378	0.703	0.590	0.518	0.566	0.254
EC4	0.501	0.773	0.429	0.599	0.579	0.508	0.584	0.285
EM1	0.409	0.445	0.801	0.412	0.477	0.344	0.381	0.502
EM2	0.400	0.497	0.839	0.404	0.432	0.348	0.499	0.549
EM3	0.438	0.386	0.804	0.467	0.430	0.389	0.508	0.577
EM4	0.469	0.423	0.801	0.432	0.442	0.350	0.507	0.657
EM5	0.472	0.352	0.818	0.512	0.450	0.355	0.521	0.587
GPI1	0.562	0.636	0.465	0.832	0.660	0.627	0.634	0.294
GPI2	0.593	0.732	0.424	0.816	0.606	0.546	0.606	0.278
GPI3	0.584	0.695	0.448	0.856	0.676	0.636	0.634	0.304
GPI4	0.563	0.720	0.463	0.809	0.606	0.533	0.595	0.278
GPI5	0.550	0.608	0.454	0.799	0.623	0.591	0.613	0.292
HM1	0.506	0.583	0.393	0.628	0.802	0.519	0.586	0.371
HM2	0.482	0.583	0.454	0.628	0.802	0.507	0.541	0.327
HM3	0.501	0.559	0.309	0.573	0.748	0.489	0.504	0.333
HM4	0.505	0.545	0.464	0.568	0.737	0.479	0.489	0.364
HM5	0.502	0.610	0.512	0.601	0.799	0.467	0.526	0.358
PM1	0.580	0.517	0.472	0.561	0.520	0.780	0.593	0.499
PM2	0.542	0.465	0.313	0.506	0.481	0.702	0.555	0.393
PM3	0.505	0.558	0.308	0.595	0.515	0.834	0.469	0.325
PM4	0.536	0.612	0.335	0.637	0.531	0.903	0.499	0.313
SAM1	0.529	0.641	0.474	0.626	0.554	0.595	0.853	0.428
SAM2	0.572	0.598	0.470	0.628	0.568	0.497	0.826	0.458
SAM3	0.520	0.574	0.466	0.617	0.554	0.556	0.803	0.449
SAM4	0.537	0.585	0.535	0.576	0.547	0.466	0.781	0.499
SSM1	0.584	0.311	0.602	0.331	0.430	0.442	0.509	0.929
SSM2	0.570	0.295	0.618	0.287	0.398	0.365	0.470	0.840
SSM3	0.588	0.291	0.596	0.300	0.398	0.404	0.469	0.855
SSM4	0.564	0.271	0.617	0.288	0.317	0.390	0.479	0.809

al., 2019) and Effect size (f^2) is used to measure the strength of effects. Meanwhile, the Q^2 measure (with blindfolding procedure) is used to test the predictive relevance of the model (Geisser, 1974; Hair et al., 2019).

Hypothesis Testing

A The Influence of Independent Variables on the Mediator Environmental Concern (EC)

All six independent variables present statistically significant effects on the mediating variable EC ($p < 0.05$), confirming the respective hypotheses. SSM exhibits the largest impact ($\beta = 0.403$, $t = 4.461$, $p < 0.000$), with $f^2 = 0.23$ – ‘medium effect’. SAM ranks second ($\beta = 0.340$, $t = 3.239$, $p < 0.001$), with $f^2 = 0.17$ – ‘medium effect’. PM ($\beta = 0.174$, $t = 2.386$, $p < 0.017$) and EM ($\beta = 0.216$, $t = 2.483$, $p < 0.013$) present smaller effects ($f^2 = 0.05 / 0.07$) ‘small’. CM ($\beta = 0.290$, $t = 3.205$, $p < 0.001$) and HM ($\beta = 0.277$, $t = 2.730$, $p < 0.006$) show modest effects ($f^2 = 0.11$; $f^2 = 0.12$) – ‘small’. VIF values were found to be below the critical threshold (< 5) for all EC predictors, indicating a lack of multicollinearity. All six independent variables explain a very high percentage of the EC variance ($R^2 = 0.74$), which is interpreted as ‘average’ explainability. Meanwhile, the Q^2 value of

EC, calculated at 0.57, strongly supports predictive relevance.

B The Influence of Independent Variables on the Dependent Variable Green Purchase Intention (GPI)

All six independent variables present statistically significant effects on the dependent variable GPI ($p < 0.05$). The greatest impact is shown by SSM with the values ($\beta = 0.367$, $t = 3.777$, $p < 0.000$), and with a ‘medium effect’ ($f^2 = 0.23$). CM ranks second: ($\beta = 0.279$, $t = 3.236$, $p < 0.001$), with a ‘low effect’ ($f^2 = 0.13$). Also, the VIF values for all GPI predictors are calculated below the critical threshold (< 5) and do not present multicollinearity problems. The six independent variables of the model explain a very large part of the GPI variance ($R^2 = 0.82$), a value which represents ‘high’ explainability of the GPI variance. Also, the calculation of the Q^2 value in the measure (0.66) confirms very strong predictive relevance.

C Influence of Environmental Concern (EC) in Green Purchase Intention (GPI)

EC shows a positive and statistically significant effect on GPI ($\beta = 0.212$, $t = 2.095$, $p = 0.036$), with a ‘small effect’ size ($f^2 = 0.07$). This result means that the increase in EC is associated with a small but statisti-

Table 7 Structural Model (β , t Statistics, p Value, VIF, R^2 , f^2 , Q^2)

H	Pathway	β	STDEV	T	P	Decision	VIF	R^2	F^2	Eff.Size	Q^2
1.1	HM $\rightarrow$ EC	0.277	0.101	2.730	0.006	Accepted	2.40	0.74	0.12	Small	0.57
2.1	CM $\rightarrow$ EC	0.290	0.090	3.205	0.001	Accepted	2.92		0.11	Small	
3.1	EM $\rightarrow$ EC	0.216	0.087	2.483	0.013	Accepted	2.41		0.07	Small	
4.1	PM $\rightarrow$ EC	0.174	0.073	2.386	0.017	Accepted	2.21		0.05	Small	
5.1	SAM $\rightarrow$ EC	0.340	0.105	3.239	0.001	Accepted	2.59		0.17	Medium	
6.1	SSM $\rightarrow$ EC	0.403	0.090	4.461	0.000	Accepted	2.71		0.23	Medium	
1.2	HM $\rightarrow$ GPI	0.216	0.076	2.854	0.004	Accepted	2.69	0.82	0.10	Small	0.66
2.2	CM $\rightarrow$ GPI	0.279	0.086	3.236	0.001	Accepted	3.24		0.13	Small	
3.2	EM $\rightarrow$ GPI	0.218	0.085	2.555	0.011	Accepted	2.59		0.10	Small	
4.2	PM $\rightarrow$ GPI	0.182	0.085	2.135	0.033	Accepted	2.32		0.08	Small	
5.2	SAM $\rightarrow$ GPI	0.221	0.102	2.166	0.030	Accepted	3.03		0.09	Small	
6.2	SSM $\rightarrow$ GPI	0.367	0.097	3.777	0.000	Accepted	3.33		0.23	Medium	
7	EC $\rightarrow$ GPI	0.212	0.101	2.095	0.036	Accepted	3.78		0.07	Small	

Note (β) = Coeff. (O), STDEV = Standard Deviation, $T = t$ Statistics, $P =$ level of significance, VIF = Variance Inflation Factor, R^2 = Coefficient of Determination, F^2 = Effect Size, Q^2 = Predictive Relevance.

cally significant increase in GPI. The VIF value is also calculated ($= 3.78$), below the critical threshold (< 5), without multicollinearity problems. In summary, it is concluded that all hypotheses of the study analysed so far are confirmed.

Model Fit Evaluations

Model fit was analysed according to the recommendations of Bentler and Bonett (1980), Bollen and Stine (1992), Henseler et al. (2014), Henseler et al. (2015), Dijkstra and Henseler (2015), and Hair et al. (2022). SRMR was calculated at 0.054 for both models, significantly below the 0.08 threshold that represents a good fit. d_{ULS} with a value of $=1.976$ and $d_G = 1.550$, remained below the critical limits determined by bootstrapping, indicating acceptable fit. NFI is calculated at 0.77, a value lower than the acceptable threshold > 0.90 , but the literature emphasizes that NFI is less important in PLS models that aim to predict rather than confirm the theory. The Chi-square result was 2276.824, but this measure is reported only for transparency, as it is not considered absolute in PLS-SEM.

Analysis of the Mediating Effect of Environmental Concern (EC)

After reporting the structural model, the methodological guidelines of Nitzi et al. (2016) and Hair et al. (2022) are followed for testing and interpreting indirect effects. The mediation of Environmental Concern (EC) is tested using the bootstrapping method with 5,000 subsamples. For interpreting mediation, the study is based on the principle of Zhao et al.

(2010) that mediation is supported when the test is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and the confidence interval of the indirect effect does not include 0. From the results presented in Table 9, it is concluded that only the SSM-EC-GPI relationship is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.085$; $t = 1.997$; $p = 0.046$; CI95% [0.016, 0.187]), suggesting that the increase in SSM promotes EC, which in turn promotes the increase in GPI. For other personal motivations – HM, CM, EM, PM, SAM – the indirect effects through EC were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), the results indicating a lack of mediation. In summary, we conclude that the hypothesis of EC mediation is partially supported, i.e. only for the SSM-EC-GPI relationship.

Discussion of Results

The study sample consists of many young people in an early stage of social life and career. When combined with the results of the effects of personal motivations on EC and GPI, the young sample supports the previous findings of the literature, which states that young people are more sensitive to environmental ethics (Nguyen et al., 2022) and that green consumption among them is sensitive to social pressures (Lee, 2010). Therefore, they are considered the engine of social change and sustainable consumption and constitute a critical segment for the promotion of green products.

The level of education of the sample was extremely high. Also, combined with the results of the effects of personal motivations on EC and GPI, these can be related to the level of environmental awareness and predisposition to green purchases, because a profile

Tabela 8 Specific indirect effects and Confidence Intervals Bias Corrected (Bootstrapping, 5000)

Relationship	(β)	STDEV	T	P	CI95% (BCa)		Significance
					Lower	Upper	
CM -> EC -> GPI	0.061	0.034	1.796	0.073	0.009	0.147	No Sig.
EM -> EC -> GPI	0.046	0.026	1.760	0.079	0.008	0.118	No Sig.
HM -> EC -> GPI	0.059	0.038	1.551	0.121	0.005	0.173	No Sig.
PM -> EC -> GPI	0.037	0.024	1.516	0.129	0.003	0.109	No Sig.
SAM -> EC -> GPI	0.072	0.039	1.848	0.065	0.017	0.176	No Sig.
SSM -> EC -> GPI	0.085	0.043	1.997	0.046	0.016	0.187	Significant

Note (β) = Coeff. (O), STDEV = Standard Deviation, T = t Statistics, p = level of significance.

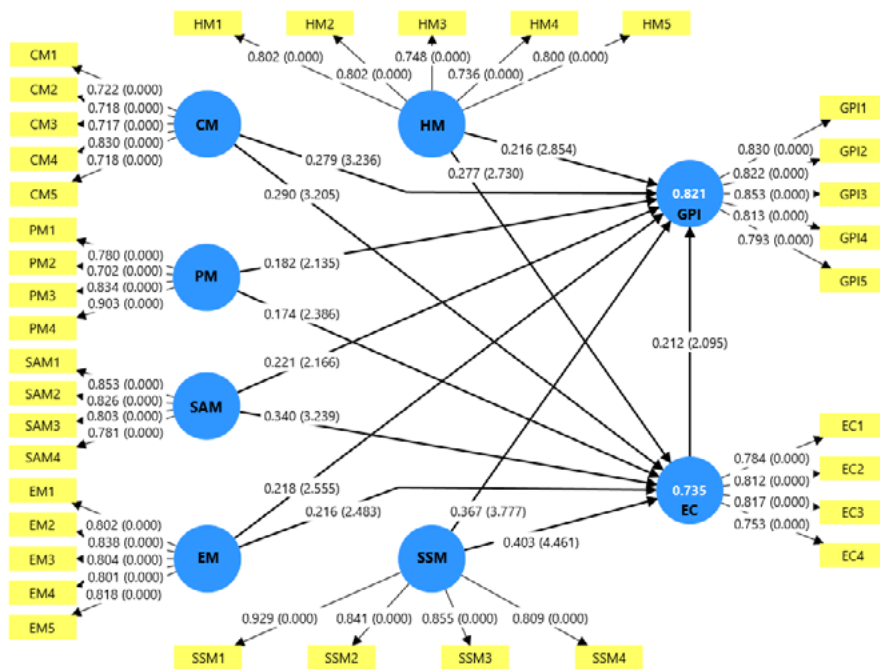


Figure 2 PLS SEM Structural Model Diagram

with a higher level of education is more likely to be concerned about the environment and, consequently, to adopt green consumption behaviours. This is because of a directly positive relationship between the level of education and the loyalty to green brands (Lin et al., 2019), as is important for promoting green consumption (Maziriri et al., 2024), since it increases GPI (Pinto-Coelho, 2018) and plays a determining role in sustainable behaviour (Rahnama, 2016; Nekmahmud et al., 2022).

Regarding the economic income of the participants, the study found that they show economic diversity. Combined with the results of the findings regarding the impact of motivations on EC and GPI, this is important for analysing sustainable behaviours, because economic factors can moderate consumers' perceptions and willingness to purchase green products. As it is found, income positively affects green consumption (Akbar et al., 2023); conversely, according to previous studies, in developing countries, low income has been found to be an obstacle to green consumption (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017).

Further to the descriptive results, the study confirms that personal motivations are significant pre-

dictors of Environmental Concern (EC) and Green Purchase Intention (GPI), even on gastronomic tourism, providing new insight into the psychological mechanisms that influence consumer behaviour in gastronomic tourism. The theoretical models, Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), Value-Belief-Norm Theory (VBN) (Stern et al., 1999), Norm Activation Model (NAM) (Schwartz, 1977) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000), serve as a strong basis for interpreting the study findings, showing that pro-environmental intentions are formed by a combination of multiple factors, including educational, socio-cultural, relaxational and symbolic factors.

First, the analysis of the direct effects of personal motivations on EC showed that SSM is the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.403$, $f^2 = 0.23$), supporting previous findings (Galati et al., 2021) which report the role of solidarity with local communities and their assistance as important factors in orienting consumers towards green behaviours. This result is consistent with previous findings by Amoako et al. (2022) reporting that consumers are often motivated by the desire to contribute to the social well-being of local communities

through their choices, adding, among other things, that motivation is related to the perception that companies that adopt green strategies are more likely to contribute to social and environmental well-being and that this perception serves to motivate consumers by promoting prosociality and increasing the desire to contribute to the social well-being of local communities through their choices.

Sensory appeal motivation (SAM) also had a strong influence on EC ($\beta = 0.340$, $f^2 = 0.17$). This result is consistent with previous studies showing that sensory experience and cultural authenticity drive appreciation for sustainably produced products. Haase et al. (2018) report that sensory experiences play a key role in the perception of quality, the creation of emotional connections with consumers, and the choice of destination.

Also, CM and HM resulted in more modest effects on EC ($\beta = 0.290$; $\beta = 0.277$), which are small effects, but theoretically significant and in line with previous findings by Akbar et al. (2023) which, in the context of consumer behaviour in relation to sustainable products, report that cultural and socio-economic barriers are encountered. However, the consumption of local food and local producer networks is related to the preservation of cultural heritage and the attitude towards green products is shaped by environmental awareness and the perception of health benefits (Asif et al., 2018). These findings carry a practical importance for local tourism actors in Albania, where organic products and traditional foods are gaining ground in tourism.

Meanwhile, EM and PM present even smaller effects on EC, respectively ($\beta = 0.216$ and $\beta = 0.174$). Referring to the existing literature, these results are somewhat expected, since environmental motivation, although logically linked to EC, is often combined with other social, psychological and economic factors, weakening its direct effect where, for example, high price is often an obstacle to green consumption (Ali & Ahmad, 2016). Meanwhile, prestige motivation such as social status is often weaker than intrinsic motivations such as social solidarity or sensory experience (Pontes et al., 2024; Chowdhury & Alamgir, 2021; Galati et al., 2023).

Second, the results of the effects of personal motivations on GPI again show that SSM was the main predictor ($\beta = 0.367$, $f^2 = 0.23$), reflecting the importance of social solidarity for the intention to purchase green products. Also, CM and SAM contributed significantly, reinforcing the previous findings of Wan et al. (2025) that cultural authenticity and sensory satisfaction are dimensions that make sustainable purchasing more attractive. While HM, EM and PM were assessed as factors with more limited influence, results that show that gastronomic tourists do not directly link green purchasing to social status or abstract environmental arguments but, rather, they link it to cultural and social values.

Third, the study results confirmed the mediation of EC only for the SSM-EC-GPI relationship: ($\beta = 0.085$; $p = 0.046$). This result is coherent with the suggestions of Zhao et al. (2010), who emphasize that mediation is not universal, since complex models often require testing multiple mediators. Also, according to Nitzl et al. (2016), mediation explains 'why' and 'how' the effects occur and, in this case, it is clear that social and civic motivation operates through environmental awareness, giving more weight to mechanisms related to the sense of social responsibility. As Chen et al. (2022) also emphasize, in the absence of other motivational factors, EC alone is not sufficient to promote sustainable behaviour. Although EC has a significant impact on sustainable purchasing behaviour, this relationship is strengthened by prosociality, and individuals with high prosociality are more likely to translate their concern into concrete action. In the Albanian context, where culinary tourism is often associated with hospitality and supporting local economies, this finding is particularly significant, while for other personal motivations (HM, CM, EM, PM, SAM), the lack of indirect effects through EC suggests that these variables may be directly related to GPI, as the results confirm that they have a direct impact on GPI, or, in different cases, are mediated by other factors, such as trust in food quality, attitudes, or subjective norms.

Fourth, from a technical perspective, the study results show high variance explainability, where the R^2 values for EC and GPI, respectively, were reported to be ($R^2 = 0.74$ and $R^2 = 0.82$), values which indicate 'medium' and 'high' explainability according to Hair

et al. (2022). Likewise, the Q^2 values were reported to be ($Q^2 = 0.57$) for EC and ($Q^2 = 0.66$) for GPI, values which, according to the suggestions of the literature in the field, confirmed 'strong' predictive relevance (Geisser, 1974).

Fifth, when analysed from the perspective of existing theories, the results reinforce the validity of the TPB by showing that (SAM), norms (SSM) and perceived values (CM, HM) shape behavioural intentions (Ajzen, 1991). At the same time, they support the VBN and NAM, showing that social values and a sense of moral obligation are more important than personal social status motives (PM) (Stern et al., 1999; Schwartz, 1977). Also, in line with SDT, intrinsic motivations (SAM, CM, SSM) were found to be stronger than extrinsic motivations (PM), reflecting the influence of intrinsic interests on GPI (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In summation of this section, it is concluded that the study makes its contribution by finding that in the context of gastronomic tourism, social motivations (SSM) and sensory motivations (SAM) are the main factors that drive green purchasing intention (GPI), while environmental concern (EC) acts as a mediating mechanism only in the case of social sustainability motivation (SSM). In the absence of empirical literature from Albania, these findings provide valuable foundations for researchers and practitioners, suggesting the need for policies that strengthen the connection between local communities and consumers through the promotion of traditional, organic and sustainable foods.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

This study provides empirical evidence for the influence of six personal motivations: Health Motivation (HM), Cultural Motivation (CM), Environmental Motivation (EM), Prestige Motivation (PM), Sensory Appeal Motivation (SAM) and Social Sustainability Motivation (SSM), in the formation of Green Purchase Intention (GPI) in the context of gastronomic tourism in Albania, with Environmental Concern (EC) as a mediating variable. The results of the PLS-SEM analysis show that SSM and SAM are the strongest

predictors of GPI, while SSM is also the factor with the greatest impact on EC. As a mediator, EC statistically significantly mediates only the relationship between SSM and GPI, suggesting that environmental awareness is activated mainly through social and sustainability-based motivations. The high R^2 values for EC (0.74) and GPI (0.82) indicate a considerable explanatory capacity of the model.

Theoretical and Practical Contributions

From a theoretical perspective, this study integrates different dimensions of personal motivations within a unified theoretical framework, combining TPB, VBN, NAM and SDT to explain the formation of GPI. It contributes by positioning SSM and SAM as important elements in gastronomic tourism, a context where social and sensory components often overlap with environmental factors. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that sustainable tourism marketing policies and strategies in Albania should emphasize and focus on the social dimension of sustainability and sensory experiences to promote sustainable purchases. Likewise, there should be an emphasis on programmes that demonstrate the positive impact of sustainable consumption on local communities and integrating them with the marketing mixes to meet quality expectations (Kukanja, 2022).

Limitations and Future Suggestions

The main limitations relate to the use of a sample of domestic tourists and visitors to gastronomic destinations in Albania. Furthermore, the measurement of variables is based on self-reporting, which may be subject to social desirability bias.

Future studies could use longitudinal designs to test changes in GPI and EC over time, as well as apply experimental methods to assess the impact of specific marketing and communication variables or any other system dynamic model based on the scenarios to formulate strategies (Štumpf et al., 2022). Examining moderators such as attitudes, subjective norms, emotional involvement, and level of environmental education could provide a more detailed understanding of the mechanisms linking personal motivations to

GPI. Also, expanding the context beyond gastronomic tourism, such as sustainable cultural event tourism, could help assess the generalizability of the model. Integrating measurable real-world behavioural data, such as purchase traces, could strengthen the validity of the findings.

References

- Abdul-Muhmin, A. G. (2007). Explaining consumers' willingness to be environmentally friendly. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 31(3), 237–247.
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211.
- Akandere, G., & Gümrah, A. (2025). The green purchase behavior of young consumers: The role of environmental knowledge. *Folia Oeconomica Stetinensia*, 25(1), 1–21.
- Akbar, N., Ghutai, G., Yousafzai, M. T., & Ahmad, S. (2023). Navigating green markets: The interplay of price sensitivity as moderator in environmental motivation and green purchase intentions. *BJKines National Journal of Basic & Applied Sciences*, 11(4), 100–111.
- Al-Adamat, A. M., Al-Gasawneh, J. A., & Sourak, N. A. (2020). The mediating effect of perceived value on the relationship between online promotion and travel intention. *Test Engineering and Management*, 83, 14911–14920.
- Albanian Agribusiness Support Facility. (2019). *Agritourism sector in Albania: Development potentials and financial needs*.
- Ali, A., & Ahmad, I. (2016). Environment friendly products: Factors that influence the green purchase intentions of Pakistani consumers. *Pakistan Journal of Engineering, Technology & Science*, 2(1), 84–117.
- Amoako, G. K., Dzogbenuku, R. K., Doe, J., & Adjaisson, G. K. (2022). Green marketing and the SDGs: Emerging market perspective. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 40(3), 310–327.
- Asif, M., Xuhui, W., Nasiri, A., & Ayyub, S. (2018). Determinant factors influencing organic food purchase intention and the moderating role of awareness: A comparative analysis. *Food Quality and preference*, 63, 144–150.
- Auger, P., & Devinney, T. M. (2007). Do what consumers say matter? The misalignment of preferences with unconstrained ethical intentions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 76(4), 361–383.
- Bentler, P. M., & Bonett, D. G. (1980). Significance tests and goodness of fit in the analysis of covariance structures. *Psychological Bulletin*, 88(3), 588–606.
- Biswas, A., & Roy, M. (2015). Leveraging factors for sustained green consumption behavior based on consumption value perceptions: Testing the structural model. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 95, 332–340.
- Bollen, K. A., & Stine, R. A. (1992). Bootstrapping goodness-of-fit measures in structural equation models. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 21(2), 205–229.
- Broccardo, L., Culasso, F., & Truant, E. (2017). Unlocking value creation using an agritourism business model. *Sustainability*, 9(9), 1618.
- Caracciolo, F., Vecchio, R., Lerro, M., Migliore, G., Schifani, G., & Cembalo, L. (2019). Natural versus enriched food: Evidence from a laboratory experiment with chewing gum. *Food Research International*, 122, 87–95.
- Cembalo, L., Migliore, G., & Schifani, G. (2013). Sustainability and new models of consumption: The solidarity purchasing groups in Sicily. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, 26(1), 281–303.
- Chan, C. S., & Marafa, L. M. (2014). Rebranding Hong Kong “Green”: The potential for connecting city branding with green resources. *World Leisure Journal*, 56(1), 62–80.
- Cheah, J. H., Amaro, S., & Roldán, J. L. (2023). Multigroup analysis of more than two groups in PLS-SEM: A review, illustration, and recommendations. *Journal of Business Research*, 156, 113539.
- Chen, L., Wu, Q., & Jiang, L. (2022). Impact of environmental concern on ecological purchasing behavior: The moderating effect of prosociality. *Sustainability*, 14(5), 3004.
- Chin, W. W. (1998). The partial least squares approach to structural equation modeling. In G. A. Marcoulides (Ed.), *Modern methods for business research* (pp. 295–336). Psychology Press.
- Chowdhury, I. U., & Alamgir, M. (2021). Factors influencing green product purchase intention among young consumers in Bangladesh. *Society & Sustainability*, 3(2), 1–15.
- Chowdhury, M. T., Sarkar, A., Paul, S. K., & Moktadir, M. A. (2021). A case study on strategies to deal with the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic in the food and beverage industry. *Operations Management Research*, 15(1-2), 166–178.
- Ciolac, R., Iancu, T., Brad, I., Adamov, T., & Mateoc-Sîrb, N. (2021). Agritourism—A business reality of the mo-

- ment for Romanian rural area's sustainability. *Sustainability*, 13(11), 6313.
- Čivre, Ž., Rebec, P., & Zabukovec Baruca, P. (2024). Consumer expectations in the context of unique tourism products. *Academica Turistica: Tourism & Innovation Journal*, 17(1), 23–34.
- Dangelico, R. M., & Vocalelli, D. (2017). "Green Marketing": An analysis of definitions, strategy steps, and tools through a systematic review of the literature. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 165, 1263–1279.
- Dijkstra, T. K., & Henseler, J. (2015). Consistent partial least squares path modeling. *MIS Quarterly*, 39(2), 297–316.
- DiPietro, R. B., & Levitt, J. (2019). Restaurant authenticity: Factors that influence perception, satisfaction and return intentions at regional American-style restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 20(1), 101–127.
- Dunlap, R. E., Van Liere, K. D., Mertig, A. G., & Jones, R. E. (2000). New trends in measuring environmental attitudes: measuring endorsement of the new ecological paradigm: A revised NEP scale. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(3), 425–442.
- Feldmann, C., & Hamm, U. (2015). Consumers' perceptions and preferences for local food: A review. *Food Quality and Preference*, 40, Part A, 152–164.
- Field, A. P. (2024). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics*. Sage Publications.]
- Finch, J. E. (2006). The impact of personal consumption values and beliefs on organic food purchase behavior. *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, 11(4), 63–76.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39–50.
- Galati, A., Cotichio, A., & Peiró Signes, A. (2021). Citizens' willingness to commit time to the planning and management of urban and peri-urban forest projects in the municipality of Palermo, Italy. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <http://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4396539>
- Galati, A., Testa, R., Schifani, G., & Migliore, G. (2023). Tourists' motivation toward culinary destination choice: Targeting Italian tourists. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 26(4), 647–668.
- Gaspar, P., Díaz-Caro, C., del Puerto, I., Ortiz, A., Escribano, M., & Tejerina, D. (2022). What effect does the presence of sustainability and traceability certifications have on consumers of traditional meat products? The case of Iberian cured products in Spain. *Meat Science*, 187, 108752.
- Geisser, S. (1974). A predictive approach to the random effect model. *Biometrika*, 61(1), 101–107.
- Gulzar, Y., Eksili, N., Koksall, K., Celik Caylak, P., Mir, M. S., & Soomro, A. B. (2024). Who is buying green products? The roles of sustainability consciousness, environmental attitude, and ecotourism experience in green purchasing intention at tourism destinations. *Sustainability*, 16(18), 7875.
- Haase, J., Wiedmann, K. P., & Labenz, F. (2018). Effects of consumer sensory perception on brand performance. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 35(6), 565–576.
- Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, 31(1), 2–24.
- Hair, J. F., Jr., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., Danks, N. P., & Ray, S. (2021). *Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using R: A workbook*. Springer Nature.
- Hair, J. F., Sarstedt, M., Pick, M., Liengaard, B. D., Radomir, L., & Ringle, C. M. (2022). Progress in partial least squares structural equation modeling use in marketing research in the last decade. *Psychology & Marketing*, 39(5), 1035–1064.
- Hall, D. R. (2000). Tourism as sustainable development? The Albanian experience of 'transition'. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 2(1), 31–46.
- Hasnah Hassan, S. (2014). The role of Islamic values on green purchase intention. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 5(3), 379–395.
- Henseler, J., Hubona, G., & Ray, P. A. (2017). Partial least squares path modeling: Updated guidelines. In H. Latan & R. Noonan (Eds.), *Partial least squares path modeling: Basic concepts, methodological issues and applications* (pp. 19–39). Springer International Publishing.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43(1), 115–135.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sinkovics, R. R. (2009). The use of partial least squares path modeling in international marketing. In R. R. Sinkovics & P. N. Ghauri (Eds.), *Advances in international marketing* (Vol. 20, pp. 277–319). Emerald Group Publishing.
- Henseler, J., Dijkstra, T. K., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., Diamantopoulos, A., Straub, D. W., Ketchen, D. J., Jr., Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., & Calantone, R. J. (2014). Common beliefs and reality about PLS: Comments on

- Rönkkö and Evermann (2013). *Organizational Research Methods*, 17(2), 182–209.
- Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1–55.
- Hu, H. H., Parsa, H. G., & Self, J. (2010). The dynamics of green restaurant patronage. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 51(3), 344–362.
- Hulland, J., Baumgartner, H., & Smith, K. M. (2018). Marketing survey research best practices: evidence and recommendations from a review of JAMS articles. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 46(1), 92–108.
- Iqbal, B., Li, G., Alabbosh, K. F., Hussain, H., Khan, I., Tariq, M., Javed, Q., Naeem, M., & Ahmad, N. (2023). Advancing environmental sustainability through microbial reprogramming in growth improvement, stress alleviation, and phytoremediation. *Plant Stress*, 10, 100283.
- Irfan, M. (2019). *Impact of environmental knowledge and concern on green purchase intention under the moderating and mediating mechanism* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Pakistan Institute of Development Economic.
- Jaiswal, D., & Kant, R. (2018). Green purchasing behaviour: A conceptual framework and empirical investigation of Indian consumers. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 41, 60–69.
- Joshi, Y., & Rahman, Z. (2015). Factors affecting green purchase behaviour and future research directions. *International Strategic Management Review*, 3(1–2), 128–143.
- Kim, Y. G., & Eves, A. (2012). Construction and validation of a scale to measure tourist motivation to consume local food. *Tourism Management*, 33(6), 1458–1467.
- Kim, S., Choe, J. Y., & Kim, P. B. (2022). Effects of local food attributes on tourist dining satisfaction and future: The moderating role of food culture difference. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 18(1), 121–143.
- Kline, T. J. (2017). Sample issues, methodological implications, and best practices. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science / Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement*, 49(2), 71–81.
- Kukanja, M. (2022). A 7P comparison between restaurant managers' and customers' post-COVID-19 quality expectations. *Academica Turistica: Tourism & Innovation Journal*, 15(2), 249–264.
- Kwon, J., & Boger, C. A. (2021). Influence of brand experience on customer inspiration and pro-environmental intention. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(8), 1154–1168.
- Lee, K. (2010). The green purchase behavior of Hong Kong young consumers: The role of peer influence, local environmental involvement, and concrete environmental knowledge. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 23(1), 21–44.
- Lin, J., Lobo, A., & Leckie, C. (2019). The influence of green brand innovativeness and value perception on brand loyalty: The moderating role of green knowledge. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 27(1), 81–95.
- Magnier, L., & Crié, D. (2015). Communicating packaging eco-friendliness: An exploration of consumers' perceptions of eco-designed packaging. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 43(4/5), 350–366.
- Maziriri, E. T., Nyagadza, B., Chuchu, T., & Mazuruse, G. (2024). Antecedents of attitudes towards the use of environmentally friendly household appliance products in Zimbabwe: An extension of the theory of planned behaviour. *PSU Research Review*, 8(3), 749–773.
- Mishra, A. K. (2023). Unravelling purchase intentions and motivations: Indian millennial green purchase intentions in FMCG personal care products. *International Research Journal of Management Science and Technology*, 14(11), 39–53.
- Mohd Suki, N., & Mohd Suki, N. (2015). Consumption values and consumer environmental concern regarding green products. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, 22(3), 269–278.
- Nekmahmud, M., Ramkissoon, H., & Fekete-Farkas, M. (2022). Green purchase and sustainable consumption: A comparative study between European and non-European tourists. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 43, 100980.
- Nguyen, K. H., & Tran, M. D. (2025). How minimalism drives green purchase intention in collectivist cultures. *Sustainability*, 17(1), 332.
- Nguyen, P. M., Vo, N. D., & Nguyen-Nhu-Y, H. (2022). Exploring green purchase intention of fashion products: A transition country perspective. *Asian Journal of Business Research Volume*, 12(2), 87–107.
- Nitzl, C., Roldan, J. L., & Cepeda, G. (2016). Mediation analysis in partial least squares path modeling: Helping researchers discuss more sophisticated models. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 116(9), 1849–1864.
- Pahor Žvanut, A., & Vodeb, K. (2023). Marketing strategies in cross-border tourist destinations: A Literature

- review. *Academica Turistica: Tourism & Innovation Journal*, 16(3), 313–328.
- Paniccia, P. M., & Baiocco, S. (2020). Interpreting sustainable agritourism through co-evolution of social organizations. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(1), 87–105.
- Passafaro, P., Cini, F., Boi, L., D'Angelo, M., Heering, M. S., Luchetti, L., Mancini, A., Martemucci, V., Pacella, G., Patrizi, F., Sassu, F., & Triolo, M. (2015). The “sustainable tourist”: Values, attitudes, and personality traits. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 15(4), 225–239.
- Pinto-Coelho, C. (2018). *Determinants of green purchase intention (GPI): Implications for marketing communication* [Unpublished master's dissertation]. Universidade Nova de Lisboa.
- Pontes, S., Naranjo-Zolotov, M., & Painho, M. (2024). From intention to action: How environmental setback perception mediates green purchase behaviour. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 470, 143285.
- Potti, A. M., Nair, V. K., & George, B. (2023). Re-examining the push-pull model in tourists' destination selection: COVID-19 in the context of Kerala, India. *Academica Turistica: Tourism & Innovation Journal*, 16(2), 173–189.
- Rahnama, H. (2016). Effect of consumers' attitude on buying organic products in Iran. *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, 22(3), 381–397.
- Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 3 [Workshop material]. NARTI. <https://narti.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/06/NARTI-SMART-PLS.docx>
- Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., Mitchell, R., & Gudergan, S. P. (2020). Partial least squares structural equation modeling in HRM research. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 31(12), 1617–1643.
- Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., Sinkovics, N., & Sinkovics, R. R. (2023). A perspective on using partial least squares structural equation modelling in data articles. *Data in Brief*, 48, 109074.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68.
- Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Hair, J. F. (2017). Treating unobserved heterogeneity in PLS-SEM: A multi-method approach. In H. Latan & R. Noonan (Eds.), *Partial least squares path modeling: Basic concepts, methodological issues and applications* (pp. 197–217). Springer International Publishing.
- Schwartz, S. H. (1977). Normative influences on altruism. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 10, 221–279.
- Shmueli, G., Sarstedt, M., Hair, J. F., Cheah, J. H., Ting, H., Vaithilingam, S., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). Predictive model assessment in PLS-SEM: Guidelines for using PLSpredict. *European Journal of Marketing*, 53(11), 2322–2347.
- Stern, P. C., Dietz, T., Abel, T., Guagnano, G. A., & Kalof, L. (1999). A value-belief-norm theory of support for social movements: The case of environmentalism. *Human Ecology Review*, 6(2), 81–97.
- Streukens, S., & Leroi-Werelds, S. (2016). Bootstrapping and PLS-SEM: A step-by-step guide to get more out of your bootstrap results. *European Management Journal*, 34(6), 618–632.
- Štumpf, P., Mattyašová, J., & Křišťáková, A. (2022). Restart of hospitality and tourism: System dynamics and scenario-based modelling. *Academica Turistica: Tourism & Innovation Journal*, 14(2), 125–136.
- Wan, C., Lee, D., Wut, T. M., & Banerjee, R. (2025). Tourists' local food consumption: Travel experience, responsible tourism, or both? *Sustainable Futures*, 9, 100663.
- Wier, M., & Calverley, C. (2002). Market potential for organic foods in Europe. *British Food Journal*, 104(1), 45–62.
- Zhao, H., Seibert, S. E., & Lumpkin, G. T. (2010). The relationship of personality to entrepreneurial intentions and performance: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Management*, 36(2), 381–404.